

Ridematch Love Stories

What better way to share Metro Ridematch success stories than by letting the participants who have benefited tell their story.

Here are just a few.

Carpool Bliss

Dear Rideshare@RideshareOnline.com,

I just had to write and share my experience with you. I live in North Everett and work in Issaquah. As you can imagine, the commute was quite grueling, especially on rainy days. Unfortunately, there is not a convenient bus route, so I had no choice but to drive. I was unsuccessful finding a vanpool that would drive one more exit on I-90 to my work, and the carpools I contacted wanted me to be the sole driver. Before I resigned myself to the fact that I would have to continue driving alone, I decided to contact one more person who was on my match list. On a Monday morning, I emailed Bill Erbeck, an employee of Costco, to see if he would be interested in carpooling. He called within 10 minutes and we decided we lived and worked close enough together that a carpool would work. We decided to meet at the park and ride and give it a try. As you can imagine, I was a little apprehensive having a strange man in my car, but after we started talking, we realized we had so much in common. As a matter of fact, we have been together ever since. We realized that we were meant for each other; we have fallen crazy in love with each other and have even started planning our future together. I wanted to tell this story to you to thank you for offering RideshareOnline.com. Because of this, I have met the man of my dreams, and couldn't be happier.

Sincerely,

Carol Bradford

Inside this issue:

- Riders Wanted?
- HOV lanes to get more crowded
- Children's Hospital makes vanpooling happen
- Bookkeeping Tips

Vanpool Empowerment

Dear Rideshare@RideshareOnline.com

I like this web site. I ride in a vanpool and find this a good way to get in touch with people who might be interested in riding in our van. The maps are a big help and showing the groupings of potential riders near our stops is very good.

Alyson Boyd (HOV 8333)

Dear Rideshare@RideshareOnline.com,

I am now using a vanpool. The web site was very easy to use, quick, and generated very prompt responses. I think that it is a wonderful enhancement!

Linda Barnes (HOV 8392)

**If you have a Ridematch success story you would like to share with others, contact us at
Rideshare@RideshareOnline.com.**

Relax – and win prizes on page 2



Relax 2003 – Take a “Spring Break” from traffic.

Each April, King County Metro provides materials to many employers in King County to promote ridesharing to their employees. During this promotional campaign, vanpoolers are eligible to win some great prizes just by commuting in their vanpool at least once each week from March 31st - April 25th during the spring Relax promotion. You are also eligible if you bike, bus, ride the train, telecommute, walk, or work a compressed schedule. Examples of some of the great prizes are a Lake Chelan getaway for two at Campbell's Resort and Amtrak train tickets. Relax entry forms are available from your Employee Transportation Coordinator, if your employer is participating, or by calling 206-625-4500. ❖

Riders Wanted?

Getting your Vanpool on the road often seems easier than *keeping* your van on the road as riders come and go with people moving and changing jobs. Trying to recruit riders to fill empty seats and keep fares low can seem daunting, but there are resources to make the process easier.

One of the simplest ways to recruit riders is to enlist your Employee Transportation Coordinator (ETC) or Human Resources department for help. Create an email that talks about the fun you have in your van and the benefits of vanpooling and ask your ETC to distribute it to co-workers who live in your home zip code. Many vanpoolers such as Johan Almstedt of HOV 8377 have used this tool to great success.

“My ETC at Eddie Bauer was very helpful in sending out an email to my co-workers who live in the same north Seattle zip code as me,” Johan said. “I have used this recruiting tool two different times and have been able to recruit four new riders into our van.”

Another highly effective and easy-to-use recruiting tactic is word-of-mouth. Simply telling friends, family, co-workers and neighbors how great vanpooling is builds enthusiasm for your group. As a matter of fact, Johan was originally “recruited” for his van in this way by a co-worker.

“One of my co-workers, who also lived near me, kept coming in to work telling me how easy and how much fun her commute was in her vanpool,” Johan recalled. “She finally convinced me to give it a shot and that’s all it took. Two and a half years later and I’m still vanpooling!”

Creating a Ridematch letter is a quick way to find riders. Call 206-625-4500 or visit RideshareOnline.com to get a list of people with similar work hours who live and work near you. The system works in reverse too. Where your van is looking for riders, potential riders use the system to look for vans. So make sure your commute information, including work hours and pick-up points, is up-to-date with your VanPool Services Representative.

Does your vanpool have a recruiting success story? If so, email it to tom.devlin@metrokc.gov and we’ll share the best ideas in the next issue of Vanpool Voices. ❖

Bookkeeping Tips

Have you moved recently?

Phone number or e-mail address changed due to relocation of job? Please notify your Accounting VanPool Services Representative so we can update our records.

Are your Excel Monthly and Ridership Report forms out of whack? Let your Accounting VanPool Services Representative know and we’ll be happy to e-mail you new spreadsheets. ❖

RIDERS WANTED





Left to Right: Jim Hagenzieker, Kraig Huguley, Diane Rebholz, Keith Fisher, Liz Langeland, Jane Driscoll, Karen Singleton, Storm van de Werken, Kittee Berfelz, Ken West, Jay Brown, and Dr. Joe Siebert.

Children's Hospital & Regional Medical Center Makes Vanpooling Happen

At Seattle Children's Hospital, vanpools are gaining momentum! Currently, 13 King County Metro vanpools bring more than 90 employees to Children's, and new vanpools are forming every month.

It's no wonder that vanpooling is so popular at Children's; vanpoolers receive a free ride to work *and* free reserved parking. In addition, the Hospital rewards its vanpool drivers with a \$250 bonus each quarter. That's right, Children's offers \$1,000 a year to drivers and 100% subsidy to riders.

Children's dedication to creative commuting solutions now includes Metro's new VanShare program. VanShare connects commuters at nearby public transportation facilities such as park and ride lots, ferry terminals and train stations to their worksite. Deborah Deissler of Children's was delighted to hear about this option. "For me," she explains, "the trouble was getting from the train station to Children's; the bus ride was longer than the train from Tacoma! The Sounder/VanShare combo is simpler and saves time!"

Stephanie Innis, Children's ETC, explains how their vanpool program complements the mission of the Hospital. "Children's employees do important work, caring for kids and their families. Vanpooling benefits our employees, which benefits our patients, which benefits the hospital. Talk about win-win-win!" ♦

HOV lanes to get more crowded

The Washington State Transportation Commission recently voted to open High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes to general traffic during off-peak hours (7:00 pm - 5:00 am) starting this summer. Highways that will be affected are SR 167, I-405, SR 520 and I-90 (east of I-405). HOV lanes on I-5 will continue to be closed to single occupancy vehicles 24-hours a day. Fortunately, this new HOV lane policy should affect few of our vanpools.

In addition, the Commission is exploring converting some of the region's HOV lanes into High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes. HOT lanes will allow single occupancy vehicles to pay a toll of less than \$45 a month to use the HOV lanes during mid-day off-peak hours. While SB 5605 allows WSDOT to convert any existing HOV lane into a HOT lane, the Commission is concentrating on HOV lanes on the eastside of Lake Washington where the HOV lanes can offer added capacity to the crowded highways.

In a press release by the Washington State Department of Transportation, Transportation Secretary Doug MacDonald said that the changes to the HOV lanes "are meant to improve conditions for drivers in all lanes by maximizing available capacity as well as maintaining speed and reliability for transit, vanpools and carpoolers."

For more information on HOT lanes and HOV lanes, including usage and Federal HOV lane guidance, visit <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/hov>. ♦

Ferry Commuters...On a New Wave



Ferry commuters ready to share the ride are receiving an irresistible combination of personalized matching assistance from Rideshare Plus and special financial incentives. Since last June, 24 new carpools, 7 new vanpools and 1 VanShare group have joined the ferry commute fleet.

Existing VanPool and VanShare groups are benefiting, too. Vanpoolers can reduce their fares just by adding additional riders or by trading up to larger vans. King County Metro's Rideshare Plus representative, Julie Paone, helps the groups find their new riders.

How about financial incentives? New ferry rideshare participants have been awarded up to a total of \$260 in vouchers to spend at Union 76, REI, AAA of Washington and other retail outlets just for joining a vanpool. New drivers and bookkeepers in ferry vanpools are receiving \$100 in Commuter Bonus vouchers. These incentives will be good throughout 2003.

There are also incentives for VanShare. Call Julie Paone if you need a rideshare connection from home to the ferry, or from the ferry to your workplace. VanShare is the answer for those short hop connections with the ferry. Julie will also

arrange for VanShare groups to have free fares and parking for their first month.

Julie and the rest of the Rideshare Plus staff will be happy to assist ferry commuters with questions regarding incentives, recruiting, VanPool driver and bookkeeper training, VanPool and VanShare formation, and registration with Washington State Ferries. You can reach Julie at 206-263-6088, or at julie.paone@metrokc.gov. ❖

VANPOOL VOICES

If you have questions, comments or story ideas, send them to: Rideshare Operations, YES-TR-0700, King County Metro, 400 Yesler Way, Seattle WA 98104, call (206) 263-4445 or write cathy.blumenthal@metrokc.gov.

*On our website:
VanPool Riders Wanted Bulletin
<http://transit.metrokc.gov>*

www.RideshareOnline.com